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'THE U.S. IS MAKING THE MOB BLEED'

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WASHINGTON — Attorney General William French Smith declared yesterday that organized crime in America is "bleeding" because of a massive crackdown by the federal government.

And he vowed to make life "even tougher" for Mafia chieftains — including the big-money men who launder mob cash through legitimate banks and businesses.

In an interview with The Post, Smith, who is expected to return to private law practice in California next month, reviewed the accomplishments of the Justice Dept. under his successful four-year tenure.

He spoke with great satisfaction about his efforts to crack down on the mob.

"Not only did we eliminate the entire leader-

ship of the Colombo family in New York, but we have decimated the leadership of other families around the country.

"And, at the very minimum, we have made them rely on secondary leadership," he said.

"The mob certainly is bleeding a lot and we intend to bleed it a lot more," he said.

He credited the success of the federal government's war on organized crime to increasing resources for organized crime strike forces throughout the country.

He also credited international cooperation with Italy and other nations where the mob does business.

Smith said that the effect of all this is that the leadership of the tightly-knit crime groups is suffering greatly, making it difficult for crime bosses

to enforce loyalty and secrecy among their soldiers.

"For so long the Mafia was able to enforce discipline, because they were able — and with some justice in the early days — to perpetuate this mystique that they were untouchable, that nobody could get to them, they could never be arrested.

"We have now shown that that 'untouchability' is a pure myth. They are not untouchable. They are being touched and thrown in jail in record numbers. That makes a lot of difference in an organization.

"We are not naive enough to think that we are going to eliminate crime or organized crime in this country," he said.

"But we can make it awfully tough for any-

body to engage in that business.

"That is exactly what we are doing. We are going to make it as tough as possible and that is going to, in due course, make it a pretty risky business to be involved in."

He said the Justice Dept. is paying special attention to the big money-men in crime groups, and to drug cartels who launder illegal cash through legitimate business "fronts."

He said saying that

there is a "major effort" afoot to "go after those networks."

Smith also spoke with satisfaction about government efforts at battling Soviet and Eastern bloc espionage activities in the U.S.

But he said the problem is not likely to go away because the Soviets appear to be increasing their spy activities in the U.S.

"It is a continuing battle," he said.

Smith also noted that the UN in New York is a "beehive of [spy] activity," where there are "tremendous amounts of espionage" that the government is trying to stop.

On other subjects, Smith cited as major accomplishments during his tenure efforts to involve the military in the interdiction of drug trafficking, criminal code reform measures that ease the burden for law enforcers and make it tougher on criminals

and the proposed immigration reform bill.

He also said that heavy criticism by Democrats over the last four years of the administration's changed civil rights policies proved to be "nonsense."

"At the time we changed civil rights division policies on quotas, busing, affirmative action and so on, there was a tremendous controversial outcry that was looked upon as an abandonment of our responsibility.

"This is nonsense and I think it is interesting that it proved to be the case, since it did not even surface as an issue during the presidential campaign," he said.

Smith also said he is fully confident that the nominee to be his successor, White House aide Edwin Meese, will be an effective Attorney General, despite the uproar in the Senate during his stormy confirmation hearings.